

Progress statement for the Multi-stakeholder pledge on Meaningful Refugee Participation, delivered during the quarterly informal briefing on the GCR, 2 December 2024

Since the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, 81 individual pledges on Meaningful Refugee Participation have been made by refugee-led organisations, national and international NGOs, foundations, governments, and the private sector. We are witnessing strong, multi-stakeholder momentum around the pledge and its purpose: to centre forcibly displaced and stateless persons in decision-making at all levels, emphasizing diversity across age, gender, and disability.

We are witnessing progress in all three key measurement areas for the pledge:

Firstly, we are seeing greater meaningful participation of refugees and stateless persons in decision-making processes at the national, regional and global levels. It was positive that several delegations to the UNHCR Executive Committee this year included representatives with lived experience of displacement. Other initiatives are also expanding representation and influence such as the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility – of which several pledge signatories are members, including Refugeepoint and the governments of Australia and of Canada.

Secondly, a growing number of initiatives aim at enhancing greater accountability to displaced and stateless communities. Refugee-led organisations (RLOs) are leading the way on this; examples include Let's Help International's work to amplify the voices of refugees and IDPs, the Kyaka Refugee Led Organisations Network's trainings to community leaders in governance and transparency, and APNOR's trainings for non-refugee allies which equip them with the tools to support genuine refugee inclusion, led by those with lived experience. In addition, other pledging entities are also ensuring more meaningful involvement in their programmes, as is the case for ILO through the engagement of Youth Network Committees, and Cohere's promotion of organisational change in this area.

Thirdly, many pledge signatories are providing RLOs with support to build institutional capacities and access funding, as is the case for Oxfam and Independent Diplomat's work with local actors across various contexts. Others are working to address the legal barriers that prevent RLOs from attracting funding and operating effectively, as seen with Pilnet's refugee-led clearing house.

Yet despite progress, we are far from achieving meaningful refugee participation, and representation is often tokenistic. We continue to face structural and logistical barriers that limit refugees' full engagement, particularly those related to access to funding and legal restrictions. This results in solutions that overlook critical needs and perpetuate a costly and ineffective response at a time when no one can afford it.

As we move forward, there must be a deeper commitment to dismantling these barriers and creating spaces where refugees- including women, children and youth- are not just included but are leading the way. We call on others to join the pledge, and join our shared commitment to creating inclusive spaces, amplifying refugee voices, and driving collective action toward a more just and equitable future for all.

Thank you.